

DAV DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Building Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans

March 23, 2004

Every Member of the United States House of Representatives

Dear Representative:

As National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), I write to urge you to oppose and vote against H. Con. Res. 393, the House budget resolution for fiscal year 2005.

For veterans' discretionary programs, primarily veterans' medical care, H. Con. Res. 393 would provide \$1.1 billion below the minimum amount of funding determined necessary by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and \$2.7 billion below the amount of funding recommended by *The Independent Budget* prepared by the DAV, AMVETS, the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

The inadequate appropriations provided in H. Con. Res. 393 will support medical treatment for 170,000 fewer veterans than the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) could treat with the funding recommended by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and will support 13,000 fewer full-time employees for veterans' medical care. With the level of appropriations in the House budget resolution, VA will be required to delay medical care for some veterans, and deny it altogether for other sick and disabled veterans, just to enable it to meet inflationary costs, including increases in employee wages.

Shortchanging veterans in H. Con. Res. 393 is all the more objectionable because it is in no way necessitated by our fiscal situation, but rather is part of a larger objective to make deep cuts in spending on veterans' and other domestic programs at the same time far more costly cuts are made in taxes. The House budget resolution is also all the more objectionable because it is part of a greater plan to impose cuts in discretionary programs, such as veterans' medical care, and impose a freeze on any improvements or adjustments in benefit programs, such as veterans' disability compensation, in FY 2006 through FY 2009. To the veterans of this Nation, it is incomprehensible that our Government cannot afford to fund their medical care and benefit programs at a time it can afford generous tax cuts costing hundreds of billions more.

The DAV must ask that Congress restore some sense of reason, responsibility, and justice to the budget process. There must be some balance between the goal of reducing taxes and the governmental responsibility of meeting our national obligation to veterans, whose contributions and sacrifices have made us the most secure and prosperous nation on earth. The DAV must ask that you vote to defeat this ill-advised budget resolution.

Sincerely,



Alan W. Bowers
National Commander